

Hierodula spp.

(Giant Asian / Giant Rainforest Mantises)



Size

Varies greatly depending on species.

Males: 2 - 4 inches

Females: 2.5 - 4.5 inches

Distribution

Most species occur in east Asia, from India east to Japan and south into Australia. Certain others are found in west Asia and Europe.

Difficulty

Easy

Humidity

50 – 80%

Temperature

75 – 85F / 24 - 30C

Total Lifespan (From Hatchling through Adulthood)

Males: 6 – 8 months

Females: 8 – 12 months

Color Variations

Green, Yellow, Brown, Pink, Turquoise - range of colors differs between species.



Introduction

Hierodula is a very common genus in the hobby, with many often available worldwide. Like most other members of the family Mantidae, they are classic in appearance and lack horns, frills, and most other ornaments. Some of the most popular species are *H. membranacea*, *H. majuscula*, and *H. venosa*. Because most species hail from tropical forests, the care requirements for each are quite similar. Hierodula are hardy animals and can tolerate a wide range of temperatures, humidities, and prey types.

These mantises start off small and delicate as hatchlings, but grow quickly. Their resilience, combined with a strong feeding response and bright coloration, make them an attractive choice for both new and experienced keepers.

Hierodula are apex invertebrate predators of their regions. Powerful, aggressive, and active, these giant mantises are able to tackle a wide variety of prey. Females are known to prey upon snakes, lizards, small birds, rodents, amphibians, and even fish in the wild. Once grabbed by a Hierodula, a small animal is quickly subdued, crushed in powerful forelimbs while the mantis's

sharp jaws cleave through the toughest exoskeletons. Despite their capabilities, insects are still the most important aspect of a mantis's diet and a captive Hierodula does not require any non-insect food.



Sexing

As with all mantises, males have 8 external sternites, and females have 6.



Keeping

Hierodula can be kept communally until i3 if provided enough space and food. At i4 they become much more aggressive to siblings, and separating is recommended to minimize losses. Males and females molt 8 to 9 times, though small males may have one fewer molt. They prefer ample space and need easily-gripped surfaces for the later molts, as older nymphs are heavy and susceptible to falling mid-molt from a flimsy perch. Shelf liner, mesh, branches, or cork bark are recommended to prevent such mismolts.

Recommended space is as follows:

Instar 1 – 2: 8 oz/.25 liter Deli Cup

Instar 3 - 6: 32 oz/1 liter Deli Cup

Instar 6 – Adult: 80oz/2 liter Container or Bigger

Typically, your mantis enclosure's height should be at least 3x the current length of the mantis.

Feeding

Instar 1 - 3 – Drosophila fruit flies

Instar 3 – 6 – Houseflies, Roaches, Small Crickets

Instar 6 – Adult – Bluebottle Flies, Roaches, Crickets



Breeding

Hierodula is a fairly easy genus to breed. Males will mate as soon as 2 weeks after adulthood, and females in around 4. Males are readily stimulated by calling females and by visual cues. Due to the female's aggressiveness, it is important to keep prey and tools on hand to reduce the chance that she eats the male before mating. Begin by placing the male on a suitable surface, such as a tall net cage, curtain, or large house plant. Allow the male to calm down and get used to his surroundings for a couple of hours to a day. Once he's resting in one place, introduce the female nearby and facing away from him. The male will usually notice her when she moves. Once the male's attention is on the female, you can offer prey to the female with tongs until the male mounts. This may take anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Mated females will often lay 4 – 7 oothecae, each containing 100 – 200 nymphs. The oothecae usually require around six weeks to hatch. In most species all the nymphs hatch at once, though some, like *H. majuscula*, hatch over several days. It is important to keep an ootheca for a few more days after it hatches in order to make sure all nymphs have emerged.

